

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 131

To express the sense of the Senate regarding the provision of technical assistance in the restoration of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 6, 1997

Mr. DOMENICI (for himself, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. COATS, Mr. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MACK, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. HELMS, and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

To express the sense of the Senate regarding the provision of technical assistance in the restoration of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

Whereas the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi is one of the finest examples of Italian Gothic art and architecture;

Whereas the Basilica is a living museum providing a home for the art of several great masters of the 13th and 14th centuries, and these art treasures depict scenes from the Old Testament and New Testament;

Whereas the Basilica housed the most interesting and important pictorial cycle in Franciscan iconography;

Whereas the famous fresco artist, Cimabue, began his work in the Basilica in 1277, and the works of Cimabue are

seen in the apse and the vault of the Basilica and include a lovely Madonna with Child;

Whereas Cimabue's pupil, Giotto painted frescos at the turn of the 14th century and completed 28 famous and beautiful scenes based on St. Bonaventure's account of St. Francis' major accomplishments during his life. The frescos depict the life of St. Francis who had the special gift of understanding and being able to speak to animals;

Whereas other talented artists including Simone Martini and Pietro Lorenzetti left their artistic mark on the Basilica during the first half of the 14th century, frescoing the left side of the transept of the Lower Church;

Whereas the Basilica was severely damaged by twin earthquakes on September 24 and 25, 1997, the extent of which has been described as more devastating than the World War II bombings of Padua and Pisa in 1944;

Whereas the famous frescoes painted by Giotto on the side walls of the Basilica in the early 14th century and depicting scenes from St. Francis' life are cracked but mostly intact;

Whereas experts in Italy are already working to restore the Basilica; and

Whereas the National Gallery in London and the Louvre in Paris have offered experts free of charge to help in the restoration of the Basilica: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Smithsonian Institution, the Na-
- 2 tional Gallery of Art and any of the other premier art mu-
- 3 seums in the United States having pertinent expertise in
- 4 restoration should provide technical assistance to aid in
- 5 the restoration of the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi and

- 1 the works of art that have been damaged in the earth-
- 2 quakes.

